



## **Region One**

# **Billings Planning Rule Roundtable Report**

**April 13, 2010**

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## **I. Executive Summary**

The Forest Service is revising the Planning Rule, the rule under which individual National Forest plans are developed. The rule will be revised through a collaborative process, part of which has been to conduct roundtable meetings in each Region.

In Region One of the Forest Service, headquartered in Missoula, Montana, three roundtables meetings were held simultaneously on April 13, 2010. Approximately 200 people participated in the Region One roundtables in person.

Participants selected discussion topics from four topic categories including;

- General: What makes for a great planning rule?
- Plan Content: What information should a plan contain?
- Substantive: How should forest plans deal with restoration, climate change, watershed health, plant and animal diversity, ecosystem services, contributions to local economies, and uses of National Forest and grasslands?
- Process: How should plans be developed?

Roundtable meeting attendees supported transparency and collaboration in developing the new rule and subsequent Forest Plans. There was a general belief that the current process is too complex, time consuming, and expensive. Participants encouraged the Forest Service to involve all potentially interested parties--adjacent landowners, forest users, local government, state and federal agencies--early and throughout the process, using a variety of media to communicate information, and making it convenient to participate.

Attendees acknowledged that forest planning is taking place with many uncertainties. They generally supported flexibility and adaptability in planning as long as course corrections were based on monitoring results and sound science. Ecosystem resilience, forest and watershed health were recurring themes with restoration supported when specific goals and outcomes could be identified.

Finally, participants at each meeting asked that the Forest Service recognize and consider appropriately local communities' interests and ties to the public land and the impacts that National Forest decision-making has on their communities.

This report was prepared by the facilitation team independently of the Forest Service. Interested individuals are encouraged to read the meeting documentation in Section V.

## **II. Introduction**

On April 13, 2010, three all-day roundtable meetings were held simultaneously in Region One. The three venues, Missoula, Montana, Billings, Montana, and Coeur d'Alene, Idaho were linked through the Forest Service's video technology system. Opening remarks were made by the Chief of the Forest Service via video and in person by the Regional Forester, Leslie Weldon. Regional Forester, Weldon, spent the entire day at the roundtable in Missoula. Local line officers were present at the Billings and Coeur d'Alene roundtables.

The public roundtables were noticed in the Federal Register, through local newspaper articles, posted on the regional and national websites, through letters of notification, and through personal contacts with tribal officials. Letters of notification were mailed to approximately 400 stakeholders identified by the Forests one month prior to the roundtables. Participants were asked to pre-register for the meetings to help with logistics, but pre-registration was not required.

There were 131 participants at the roundtable in Missoula, 35 at the roundtable in Billings, and 30 at the roundtable in Coeur d'Alene. Non-Forest Service facilitators and recorders, and some Forest Service employees are not counted in these numbers. A wide variety of interests were represented across the regional roundtables including; recreation, timber, environmental, education and research, oil and gas, grazing, other state and federal agencies, local, state and national elected officials and/or their staff, Forest Service retirees, and current Forest Service employees (planners, specialists, leadership.)

The roundtable agenda was organized to provide two discussion sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Participants selected the two topics of most importance to them and participated in table discussions on these topics. The topics were categorized under the following headings; General, Plan Content, Substantive, and Process. The discussion topics under each of these headings were based on the principles published in the Federal Register Notice of Intent in December 2009.

The roundtables were facilitated by the Beck Consulting team of four facilitators retained by the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution. Flip chart recorders were provided for each of the small group discussion tables. Recorders captured all key points made regardless of whether there was agreement. The recorders consisted of a combination of independent contracted recorders, University of Montana students from the College of Natural Resources, and Forest Service employees.



### **III. Background**

The Forest Service is undertaking a collaborative process to revise its planning rule. The planning rule provides the guidance for preparing individual Forest Plans. The collaborative process has several components. These components include; a national science forum, three national roundtables, a national tribal meeting, a federal inter-agency group, an internal working group, roundtable meetings in each of the Regions, and new media to make access to all of the planning information readily available and transparent.

The regional roundtables will be completed by the end of May 2010. The Forest Service timeline calls for Chief approval of the proposed rule in August, Chief approval of the final rule in June 2011 and publication of the final rule and Record of Decision in the Federal Register in November 2011.

The goals and objectives of the planning rule process are:

- Open and participatory process
- Address Notice of Intent principles
- Develop a durable planning rule
- Develop a practical and efficient rule
- Incorporate an all-lands approach to address relationships of NFS lands to surrounding landscapes
- Develop a process that uses contemporary planning methods to incorporate the latest science into land management plans



**Missoula Roundtable**

## **IV. Themes**

While there was inadequate time to achieve consensus, a number of themes emerged from the roundtable discussions. Many of these themes transcended individual discussion questions and crossed more than one of the principles. The themes below are those ideas that were either expressed frequently, appeared to enjoy wide-spread support, and/or arose during discussions from several different topics. Once again, readers should not assume consensus was achieved on the following themes and divergent viewpoints did exist. They are listed below with no priority order.

### **I. General**

- New rule needs to be legally defensible
- New rule needs to be simple
- New rule needs to consider local input while recognizing that NF lands belong to all people of the United States
- New rule needs to be consistent with existing federal laws and have limited adaptability and flexibility
- New rule needs to be formulated with public input
- New rule needs to be equitable and rational
- New rule should guide plans that encourage volunteer participation and stewardship
- New rule should encourage plans to include a broader, more diverse range of users.
- Science should be the basis for decision-making
- Significant changes to plans should have full public involvement
- Access to public lands should be high priority
- Re-enact Public Land Law Review Commission
- Funding should be adequate
- New rule should include accountability

### **II. Plan Content**

- Scientific study and background
- Multiple use input
- Specifically address the following: watersheds, sustainability, old growth, wilderness, endangered species, access, economy and jobs, oil and gas, recreation, locally specific topics, and others
- Attention to all uses and resources
- Concrete decisions, standards and accountability
- Adaptive management
- Address climate change, carbon sinks
- Comply with NEPA
- Basis for policy formulation should be 50% national, 50% regional. Within the regional policy the basis should be 33% national, 33% state, and 33% local.

### III. Substantive

- Restoration should address logging, fire, eco-restoration, and wildlife viability
- Landscape restoration should address fauna and flora viability, urban interface, ownership pattern, fire, roads, and native species recovery
- Restoration should address removal of man-made infrastructure
- Must have large-scale plan
- Define sustained growth
- Use best science
- Recognize native plants may migrate naturally
- Look beyond administrative boundaries
- Address non-native species
- Manage vegetation for carbon sequestration
- Mitigate grazing based on climate impacts to forage quality
- Utilize fire and selective logging for conifer reduction
- Reduce noxious plants
- Manage ground disturbance to reduce sediment
- Manage watersheds outside of forest/grassland boundaries
- Collaborate between jurisdictions
- Water is high priority and should always be protected

### IV. Process

- Make sure teams have planning specialists
- Faster is cheaper, but is it better?
- Process needs flexibility
- Need local collaboration without pre-determined outcomes
- Review what has been working and carry forward
- Monitor plans on an annual basis
- Don't specify how often for revisions, prepare them as needed
- Consider science from many perspectives
- Adaptive management based on monitoring
- Figure out ways to better inform the public
- FS needs to make a better effort to get people to the table
- Agency people need to get out earlier and more widely
- Agency staff should have communications training

## V. Meeting Documentation

### 1 GENERAL FEEDBACK

#### What would a GREAT planning rule look like? (R1 Question 1)

- Legally defensible
- Standardized groups by resource—wildlife, recreation, etc.
- Adaptable to local conditions while recognizing implications for non-locals
- Improve and restore ecosystem conditions
- Simple and black and white
- Majority of stakeholders agree that it is a good plan for consensus
- Plan should be responsive to user demand or need to disperse use – open new areas vs abuse one area
- Give the FS responsibility to manage locally
- K.I.S.S. –Keep it simple!
- Collaborative – General Consensus
- Agency Managers, Counties, Landowners -- have Big Role. Recognize the importance of their role.
- \*Short. To the Point.
- \*Achievable
- \*Limited adaptability and flexibility takes into account the future but current and consistent with all federal laws (e.g., ESA, NEPA, NFMA, clean air, antiquities, etc.) and executive orders that affect National Forest.
- Bi-partisan and legally defensible
- Define the values for NFS lands not be prescriptive (fewer standards)
- Should have mandatory standards and requirements
- 1982 rule/procedures worked but was still time consuming and expensive
- Good Plan would listen to the locals
- Needs to account for climate change
- Addresses native plants and wildlife species
- Address multiple use of NFS lands and climate change
- Plan has to recognize NFS lands belong to all the people of the U.S.
- \*Formulated by public input (charette)
- \*Plan ends up contributing to status of public wildlife resource (not in decline), public enjoyment, money
- \*Equitable and rational



## 2.1 What Currently Works about Forest Service Planning?

### What concepts would you like to continue into the next planning rule? (R1 Question 2)

- 1982 Rule – funding process worked well (20 years ago) – start locally and through regional/national levels
- Collaborative/Public involvement
- Communication times 3
- Nothing. When it's done, lawsuits. Eliminate lawsuits if you want to get something done.
- Protest process—if you don't participate you can't protest.
- Managers have most of the information—Put it together! Avoid expensive, long planning process.
- Stakeholders don't know what the planning process is—video, pdf and simple web access to comment
- All federal laws
- Restoration concept
- This process we like (so far)
- 1982 rule worked except for the time and money. First years were contentious, then moved to more partnership in latter years of Forest Plan development
- Public input now, during, and after
- Current effort (this 20101 effort) feels much less top down and more bottom-up
- Monitoring can work – 2x/yr
- Planning efforts change direction depending upon the current administration. This is not working. Given the limited resources there is a lot of workforce and dollars spent
- Early discussions/buy-in is good and works
- Every ranger district should see the roll-up of these meetings and comments
- No greater than 2000 pages; be brief!
- \*The plan should encourage volunteer participation and stewardship
- \*There is a resource valued by public, evidenced by usage and participation in the process
- \*Goals set are very valuable for defining desired future state
- \*Broaden and diversify the rules to include a broader range of users-manage for them based on science and impacts (e.g. mountain biking)

## 2.2 What Doesn't work?

### What concepts would you like to leave behind? (R1 Question 3)

- Legal challenges
- Amount of work needed to do forest plans without funding to support
- National quotas
- Changing forest service staff
- People involved in initial scoping should be allowed to participate in next steps—even if they miss one step (EIS process)
- Lawsuit should be generated locally
- Enforcement – not happening!
- User-created trails should not be allowed nor recognized.
- Forest Plan schedules are not in harmony with other land management agencies adjacent to or sharing the landscape. (i.e., BLM, NFS, State, BoR, and USFS)
- Travel planning is being carried out under 10 year old Forest Plans
- Subplans -- FS needs to have flexibility to develop a management plan
- Access to National Forest land needs to be a high priority
- Not a vote- vocal minority
- Binding regulations withstanding politics
- \*Any significant change to the plans must first go through the same level of public involvement as the original rule
- \*More accountability—Measurable standards (Watchdog groups that force FS to be accountable) – Public Watchdog Group—Resource Advisory Committee
- \*Lack of funding
- \*Re-enact the Public Land Law Review Commission authorized by law, commissioned by the president.
- \*Local emotion on issue sometimes overwhelms objective, science-based decision-making
- \*Leave political process out of forest plan. Consider publicly owned resource first.

## 2.3 Other General Input

### 3. PLAN CONTENT

#### What should the rule require of plan content? (NOI process principle 3)

##### 3.1 Information and Issues

##### What information and topics do you want to see in a plan? (R1 Question 4)

- Multiple use input
- Guidance – details – relationships between multiple users i.e., wilderness, timber, recreation
- NFSA --Congressional Act—Rules—1976 Title 16 U.S.C. what is the law?
- Must be a FS planning “rule” --Current rule: 1982-- Criteria for and considerations – physical, biological, sciences
- Land Management Practice
- Watershed protection
- Preserve resources – water
- Sustainability
- Conservation
- Standards for public health and safety
- Public use by region and public input by region
- \*Scientific study and background
- In accordance with NEPA
- Concrete decisions, standards & accountability
- \*Multiple use input
- Restoration—water, habitat
- Long term effects—climate change, global & regional
- Population change
- Population impact
- Economy and jobs
- Adaptive management—i.e. high use and ability for Regional Forester for flexibility
- Carbon sinks
- Management by region
- Roadless areas to be addressed
- Wilderness
- Old growth
- Endangered Species Act
- Public Access for Public Lands
- Each plan be considered a contract with the public – changes to “contract” require process (EIS)
- Topics that are unique or a priority to the area

- Overall umbrella of goals using good & current science
- Local government plans should be included in planning process – guide local forest plans
- Agree plan is a contract but full EIS not always necessary – EA level may be appropriate
- All uses –i.e., oil and gas, recreation ,etc. should have same weight/importance within plan
- Forest Plans should be site specific
- National goals should allow flexibility for local site specific conditions – science based
- More local economic information

## 3.2 Shared Vision

*Should the planning rule support the creation of a shared vision for each planning area and, if so, how? (R1 Question 5)*

- Shared vision with Regional input – not necessarily Washington D.C.--Public input
- Promotion of public input forums
- Charette—planning process—joint collaboration
- Local and national perspectives on National Forests
- \*Policy formulation—how is it done? For adoption (should be): Regional: 50% / National 50%; Regional planning based on: National: 33%/ State: 33%/ Local 33%
- \*Economy – local \$ coming in
- Recreation
- Impact
- Don't give the FS a burden that can't be overcome
- Rules should not mandate a “shared vision”
- Plan should require vision statement – could separate by geographic areas with different emphasis
- Shared vision through collaborative process—grass roots start
- Shared vision for specific forest goals –what use is appropriate where; resources are important and must be protected
- Multiple use must be responsive to changing ecosystems – not set in stone
- Adaptive management
- Shared vision requires collaborative process –hard to come to consensus
- Shared vision with flexibility fore regional and local differences and specific management areas
- Shared vision generated locally

### 3.3 Standards and Guidelines

#### *Should the new planning rule require standards and guidelines in all plans? (R1 Question 6)*

- Like BLM—national standard progressed to regional standards
- Thoughtful considerations, i.e. grazing permits
- \*Flexibility for the Forester to direct Regional Standards even within the State
- Guidelines – yes
- \*Standards-yes
- All plans? Maybe not, i.e. trails: new; maintenance; closure?; sustainability
- Flexibility
- Accountability of Managers
- Concrete standards
- \*Up to date standards to include a new variety of users based on new scientific data
- Standards to protect all users
- “Triggers” to protect those standards--i.e. open for public comment; --i.e. scientific review; --areas? Open for review; --specific trails? For review
- Rule should provide framework for standards and guidelines but specifics come from forest level
- Standards and guidelines should represent a reasonable approach to reach goals – many ways to reach same goal
- Rule should provide standard format and content for standards and guidelines
- Definitions of key terms needed, i.e., “suitable uses,” “good science”
- Broad based, generated bottom up, not top down –using good science

### 3.4 Scale

#### *How should the planning rule treat national consistency and regional differences? (R1 Question 7)*

- Policy formed from bottom up with accumulated data from regions
- Planning rule must have respect for and input from different regions
- National rule takes federal laws: NEPA, NFMA translated into a program the USFS can achieve – thoughtful policy
- + Business – contention +Conservatory – contention +Cooperation –contention = multiple use mission for USFS
- Enjoyment for the public
- Economy 1-10; Recreation 1-10; and prioritize
- Is the policy updated enough to establish a policy?
- \*Are changes needed to existing policy? Law? 1976 vs. 2010 issues
- Stand alone ecosystems combined with differing ecosystems
- Other regions connected to different eco systems BLM← →USFS

- Multiple agency communication & coordination & interaction needed--Deficiencies to existing laws
- Changes needed to existing Law
- Inclusion of alternative land protection measures
- Coalition of different laws
- USFS direction
- Start with standard/basic format from National Level – some sections may be not applicable for specific forest
- National consistency very difficult –political changes—potential roadblocks
- Consistent format important for funding
- National level standards and guidelines should specify that Forest plans will conform with local needs
- Process must be consistent –format/template, clear process to consider local differences
- National standards and guidelines should be very broad; i.e., goal of “health grassland” will look different in different areas
- Need framework to address recreational uses –once an area is closed, should not always be set in stone—allow to rehabilitate and re-open
- There is inherent value in wilderness and protected areas –natural processes allowed to occur
- Start at local level using planning rule for consistency in process

### 3.5 Other Content Input

## SUBSTANTIVE TOPICS

### 4.1 Restoration (NOI substantive principle1)

*How should the Forest Planning Rule promote restoration of national forest system lands? (R1 Question 12)*

- \*Restoration – Implement/Address the following: A. Logging, B. Fire, C. Eco-Restoration, D. Wildlife Viability
- \*Landscape Restoration for: Fauna and Flora viability; Wildland/Urban Interface must take place closer to urban areas; consolidation of land ownership; utilize fire for habitat restoration; reclaim roaded landscapes; native species recovery
- \*Removal of man-made infrastructure (roads, fences, structures)
- \*Restoration must have a large-scale plan (i.e. multiple forests, BLM, private jurisdictions)
- \*Reduce cumulative impacts of wind and oil development on focal species
- \*Define “sustained” growth



- \*Use of best science for monitoring
- Identify and prioritize areas that need restoration (Not everything needs to be “restored.”) Is it appropriate to restore?
- What is definition of “Degraded” and “Restoration”?
- Endangering public safety—wildlife safety (ensure and manage for viable populations)
- Ecological Sustainability
- Secure funding for restoration
- Use (real) science to guide restoration
- Public input—what’s the level of influence? -- Use Science
- Consider new technologies
- Focus on watershed health

## 4.2 Climate Change (NOI substantive principle 2)

*How should the planning rule address potential affects of climate change? (R1 Question 13)*

- \*Realize that native plant and animals may naturally migrate to reside in different locations
- \*Look beyond administrative boundaries to address species biodiversity on large scale – \*buffer areas
- \*Utilize most current best science
- \*Must address non-native species--Noxious grasses/Plants—Use tools that do not adversely impact native species
- \*Don’t wait for perfect science before taking action – Scenario based planning
- \*Manage vegetation for carbon sequestration
- \*Mitigate grazing AUMs based on climate impacts to forage quality – stricter reviews of Annual Operating Instructions
- Anticipate the effects of climate change and integrate into the planning process
- Identify and eliminate stressors and adaptive (flexibility)
- Use most recent science (independent science)
- Be cautious about how we address climate change.
- Natural events cause climate change too (wildfires) –they shouldn’t get a free ride
- Look at possible effects on individual forest

### **4.3 Watershed Health (NOI substantive principle 3)**

#### **4.3.1 Watershed Approach**

**What should the planning rule say about water resources and watershed health? (R1 Question 14)**

- \*Utilize fire and selective logging for conifer reduction—rejuvenation of surface waters
- \*Reduce noxious plants
- \*Manage ground disturbing activities to reduce sediment
- \*Implement riparian buffers on grazing AUMs
- \*Manage ground and surface water as one system
- \*Manage watersheds outside of forest boundaries (grasslands)
- \*Collaboration between jurisdictions and private lands
- \*Water is high priority—always should be protected
- Each National Forest should have its own individual watershed plan
- Each “project” should take effect on water into account (and cumulative effects)
- FS should consider other non-National Forest system land and land uses within the watershed (e.g. coal bed methane)
- All streams should be maintained at a functional level (minimal flow – holistic approach)

#### **4.3 Watershed standards, guidance and Best Management Practices (BMPs)**

### **4.4 Diversity of plants and animals (NOI substantive principle 4)**

#### **4.4.1 Providing for Diversity**

**At what landscape scale should the Forest Service analyze and provide for diversity of plants and animals (individual unit, watershed, landscape scale)? What are workable ways to incorporate a broader perspective? (R1 Question 15)**

- The terms in the question are ambiguous—scale, watershed, etc.
- \*Work at watershed scale. Work with neighboring land agencies to manage large area.
- USFS should have input into management of plants and animals. Advisory to other agencies (e.g. FWS, EPA, etc.). Example—weeds, scale varies depending on what you are managing for.

- \*Scale: watershed. Manage by individual unit. Can't apply 1 management approach across multiple units
- \*Scale: Eco-regions should be managed differently. (e.g., Arizona different from Montana)
- Grasslands eco-region—manage at 2-3 million acre scale in order to manage for diversity of plants/habitats and achieve recovery of threatened or endangered species (ocean of grass) World Wildlife Fund website
- At large scale – need to work with multiple agencies. Who is the top dog agency? Confusion.
- For weeds—county is top dog agency. For animals...choose a leader—Department of Agriculture, Department of Interior, States
- \*Form a collaboration of agencies, landowners around a particular landscape/issue

#### 4.4.2 Protecting At-Risk Species

#### 4.4.3 Monitoring

### 4.5 Ecosystem Services (NOI substantive principle 5)

### 4.6 Contribution to vibrant local economies (NOI substantive principle 5)

**What should the planning rule say about how plans deal with the provision of goods and services that contribute to vibrant local and national economies? (R1 Question 16)**

- \*What are indicators of vibrant local economy? --Employment, --Income, --Public Revenues
- \*Within framework of National Forest for everyone
- \*Economic impact assessment needs to have greater weight for local economy-need to improve economic numbers
- Local is important but shouldn't be controlling factor
- Consider all sources of revenue from Forest uses
- Locals should have stronger voice
- Economic aspect of recreational uses should be considered
- Understand economic consequences of access
- Plans must address deferred maintenance and backlog
- If Forest is vibrant system, it will contribute to the local and national economy
- Fully fund Secure Rural Schools and communities
- Acknowledge local government plans
- Address non-market economic impacts – i.e., “what is the value of the existence of forest to someone in Chicago who visits occasionally”
- Future generations and changing economies
- \*Need to maintain our NF as an economic engine

- \*Utilize sound economic data and models for use of National Forest and local communities
- \*Coordinate land/use plans with local communities/governments
- \*FS activities supports local and national economies
- \*Sound science—for all disciplines
- \*Sound science peer reviewed to ensure the sustainability of the local plant and wildlife resources that contribute to the local economy
- \*Interpretive, environmental information is needed at trailheads and facilities
- \*Plan should provide opportunities to work with local communities for environmental information and interpretation
- Assess and evaluation ecosystem services provided by FS lands
- If resource (recreation, industry, forest) that benefits local economy—recreation tourism bolster local economy—plan should consider
- \*Recreation a “goods and service” should be included in multiple use term
- \*Financial benefit to nearby communities to manage for wildlife in conjunction with USFS, e.g., Farm Bill conservation dollars directed to landscape
- Competing economies (e.g., timber, recreation, wildlife, ecosystem services)—which prevails in a forest Plan?
- Forest plans bend to will of state (example requirements to be guided on public lands in Wyoming). Today there is a lot of local control.
- \*Economy should not override sustainability of any economic use. Science should prevail. For example ability to cut x# board-feet should not negatively affect wildlife and recreation.

## 4.7 Use and Enjoyment of NFS Lands (NOI substantive principle 5)

### What should the planning rule say about suitable uses?(R1 Question 17)

- Dept. of Agriculture –continue multiple use, not “Park Service”
- Not all areas are suitable for all uses
- What are appropriate places for uses done in the right way—hydropower, mining
- No reduction of lands open for multiple use, i.e., lands without restrictions like wilderness/roadless—want more lands open—should be 50/50
- Plans should be more permissive
- Management across administrative boundaries, i.e. beetle kill, fire, wilderness
- More proactive management within wilderness
- Soil/water conditions of specific units—should be addressed—not “one size fits all.”
- Suitable uses are based on good science—will dictate to FS what uses are appropriate where. Economy and uses should not drive plans/uses.
- Use local government plans in development of local forest plans.
- If you have areas with special characteristics they warrant special consideration in plan
- \*Viability of native wildlife resources must be considered

- \*Appropriate uses in appropriate places, i.e. no activities in sensitive plant/wildlife areas, old growth preserves, etc.
- \*Multiple uses to allow for recreation
- \*Continued use and enjoyment of National Forest
- \*Address and ensure public access
- \*Energy development would be a suitable use; with consideration to visual quality
- \*Cooperation between land/fish wildlife agencies to determine uses
- \*Define suitable uses—should area define the suitable use?
- \*Use should not be detrimental to the resource (wildlife, water quality,...)
- \*FS should take a common-sense approach to “use” based on science and sound professional judgment of resource professionals
- \*Today use=extractive and Enjoyment=Recreation, but use should include recreation (which can also be extractive—examples—hunting, fishing.
- \*FS lands should be managed to enhance resources—wildlife should play a role in restoration of wildlife (“raise the bar”) particularly species of concern or in decline

**What should the planning rule say about access, visitor facilities, and services? (R1 Question 18)**

- Forest plan should address – should adhere to local culture and economics of area
- How access will be developed to protect resource/over access vs. under access
- Forest should get funding to do what plan says-- i.e., Transportation system--If it can't be maintained cut back to fund priorities
- Forest plans should have a strategy to deal with access facilities and services reflective of funding
- Services—more people to police areas—enforcement of rules—both formal and informal
- Priority of FS should be for use, sustainability
- Maximize public access
- FS should not focus on providing visitor facilities—other than basic—roads/trails
- No more wilderness—just keep what we have
- Maintain integrity (OK with sustainable uses of NFS) of Forest for future generations
- Existing facilities adequate but must deal with increased pressure and use “lock it down now.” Don't see it deteriorate.
- Plans should consider visitors who don't live in area and local culture/economy
- Wilderness, Roadless, all other FS lands and designation (e.g. grizzly habitat) should be included in planning discussions –don't automatically exclude lands with other uses and restrictions
- Facilities—campgrounds important now and in future
- Consider handicap access and involvement in process
- Access to the NF—protect access we have and be aggressive to acquire new access
- Protect informal access
- \*Plan should address visitor facilities and services; in a limited fashion based on the area and amount of use. Also, where applicable.

- \*Environmental effects must be in NEPA compliance
- \*Forest plans must determine if the facilities are an appropriate use
- \*Developed campgrounds are important with growing population don't reduce #. This is to help reduce dispersed camping. There is a change in campground use—campers vs. tent; horse trailers, hitching posts, etc.
- \*Diverse campgrounds for such uses as tent campers
- \*Improve access to trailheads, NFS lands
- \*Maintain existing trails
- \*Public access to public lands is critical
- \*FS should provide more facilities for people who are self-contained (e.g., don't need all amenities –water, fire pits, etc., but do need parking). LOW IMPACT including facilities for handicapped.
- \*FS buy easements to provide access thru private lands, so not locked out of public lands.
- \*Maintain historic trails and historic/minority uses (e.g., trails wide enough for pack animals)

## 4.8 Other Substantive Input

# 5 PROCESS TOPICS

## 5.1 Plan Revision Process (NOI process principle 3)

### 5.1.1 Improving Timeliness and Efficiency

*What suggestions do you have for making forest planning faster, simpler, more straight forward, and less expensive?(R1 Question 8)*

- Assign Teams to visit communities
- Forest Plan is not site specific –need to be site specific data
- Keep people involved start to finish for continuity
- Really listen to public and state and local government
- More involvement from local government
- Difficult for local government to devote time
- \*Make sure teams have planning specialists—Forest Service Enterprise Team
- Need guidelines for effective processes
- Problem—inconsistent (different) facilitators
- Collaboration-Cooperation-Coordination-Consultation
- Consider broad “umbrella plan” then develop site specific (like BLM)
- \*Flexibility
- Legal ramifications have to be addressed to limit legal challenges



- Clear Planning rule could limit challenge
- Know what the system is now before we can evaluate process
- Share lessons learned with BLM, others
- \*Longer time frame for planning—faster is cheaper, but is faster better?
- Leave everything alone for a while unless there are specific needs
- BLM and FS should coordinate planning –interagency coordination; involve local governments—counties
- Collaboration is #1; Consensus important
- Outreach for planning assistance?
- Experienced team of planners – FS Enterprise Teams
- How do we make sure we don't steam roll over local concerns? --Relationship between Enterprise Team and agency.
- \*Need collaboration with local without predetermined outcomes.
- Core inter-disciplinary teams knowledgeable in planning-enterprise team members—close the loopholes

### 5.1.2 Scheduling of Revisions

*How often should plan revisions occur, and should the entire forest plan be redone in each revision cycle? (R1 Question 9)*

- 15 to 20-25 years, amendments may be necessary
- \*Review-what's been working? – carry forward.
- Don't reinvent the wheel. How much do we want to tie people up in planning?
- \*Monitor plans on annual basis—"If it ain't broke, don't fix it."
- "Make the forest more valuable as we use them" T. Roosevelt
- How do we make them usable and better without making it wilderness?
- Recognize as renewable resource
- Too busy planning to do monitoring
- Conditions change. Monitor and revise.
- Looking at just Forest or is wilderness included?
- \*Don't specify how often? -- As needed
- If doing entire forest plan—do all –umbrella plan.
- Site specific may be changed
- Evaluations 5 yrs – BLM--Results of evaluation influence redoing entire plan
- Revision or Amendment? "If a travel plan is revised, I always lose."

### 5.1.3 Addressing Uncertainty

*How can a new planning rule build in flexibility to adapt to changing science, information, and new data? How should the Rule deal with uncertainty? (R1 Question #10)*

- How can we remain flexible other than simply close impacted areas. Reopen after recovery
- Concern –good science/bad science? Common sense in management. Adapt to changing science. Are we required to respond to every new theory?
- \*How is plan driven? Consider science from many perspectives.
- Top-down, bottom-up, etc. Emphasize bottom-up input. Include more perspectives. “Today’s science is tomorrow’s fable.”
- How to deal with uncertainty? With caution!
- Identify flexibility
- Uncertainty? Climate change, e.g., How does climate change affect plant and animal diversity?
- Reaction to climate change is top down, yet questionable impacts.
- How far do we follow the climate change “bandwagon” and how does it affect those “on-the-ground?”
- FS has to get away from using data generated elsewhere to make decisions here.
- \*Adaptive management due to monitoring
- How do we monitor impacts of climate change? On a local, workable level?
- \*Don’t need really prescriptive limits on items of uncertainty.
- Science is an uncertainty – science is not absolute
- What we know today is wrong tomorrow
- BLM guidance on adaptive management
- Put reality with science---What is acceptable management practice?
- What is the cost? --Not always economic. Recreation, natural resources, mining, etc.
- No unrealistic goals.
- Land managers have to be able to adapt—Experience what’s going on in the field.
- Encourage or mandate periodic evaluations.
- Examples –wolves, climate change, pine beetles.
- Move fast and make changes
- Resource Advisory Committee—BLM—helps keep them in touch with reality
- Climate change or animal change eliminate the public

## **5.2 Local and Regional Difference?**

## **5.3 Planning Update (Amendment) Cycle (NOI process principle 3)**

### **5.3.1 Ease and Frequency of Doing Amendments**

### **5.3.2 Adaptive Management**

## **5.4 Forest Planning Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NOI process principle 3) Complying with NEPA in the Development of Forest Plans**

## **5.5 Collaboration and Coordination (NOI process principle 1)**

### **5.5.1 Public Involvement**

*What is the best way to involve stakeholders, including adjacent landowners in the planning process? (R1 Question 11)*

- Cooperating agencies
- Have stakeholders review and discuss changes, EIS, etc.
- Shorten planning process to keep stakeholders engaged.
- Federal agencies need to apprise the public of planning efforts
- \*Figure out ways to better inform the public – email, new ways to communicate
- Ask stakeholders to be involved –identify stakeholders for specific area
- Some folks don't show up, then find out after the fact
- \*FS needs to make better effort to get people to the table, inform
- Custer made the effort to contact people
- County Commissioners really need to be contacted—adjacent landowners in the loop.
- What happens when you can't set involvement?
- Identify organizations who represent stakeholders in specific issues.
- Consultants take process in certain directions and control the process.
- How to involve the public?
- Info from agencies is not getting to the public
- Better communication from agencies to public, groups, local governments
- Longer public comment period
- Protest period for decisions
- Earlier public notice
- Letters to adjacent landowners and all who have expressed an interest
- Follow through—do what we say we are going to do
- \*Agency people need to get out earlier and broader—Do a good job!
- \*Agency should have training that deals with communication. Identify experts
- If you ask for input, use it

**5.5.2 Coordination with other Agencies and Governments**

**5.5.3 Review and Appeal Processes**

**5.6 “All-lands” approach (NOI process principle 2)**

**Whether/How to Use an “All-Lands” Approach**

**5.7 Rulemaking compliance with NEPA (NOI process principle 3)**

**5.8 Other Process Input**

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The following comments were submitted by Phil Jacquith in writing on April 16, 2010:

- Deal with deferred maintenance of FS facilities – esp. roads. Rule must address deferred road maintenance by requiring identification of backlog, cost to correct backlog, and a timeframe to complete needed maintenance
- Annual Forest and District budgets must be required to address maintenance – road maintenance should not be allowed to be cut year after year